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Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW, Room: 8-B115
Washington, DC 20554

September 16, 2008

Dear Commissioner Copps:

I am writing on behalf of the Community Broadcasters Association encouraging you to vote promptly on a proposal that has been circulated by Chairman Kevin Martin to issue a Notice of Proposed Rule Making to explore the possibility of Class A television stations being afforded an opportunity to convert to "full power" legal status and attain cable television carriage rights, even if they are required to remain at their current power levels.

CBA has endorsed this proposal in formal filings in MB Docket No. 07-294, explaining the important public policy objectives that the proposal would help achieve and outlining the legal authority for the Commission to act. In our initial Comments, we said:

"CBA welcomes, agrees with, and heartily endorses the Commission's tentative finding that 'cable carriage of Class A television stations could promote both programming diversity and localism, given that all such stations are required to originate local content'...CBA believes that the Commission's statutory authority to provide mandatory cable carriage for Class A stations is clear. There is a lawful path to that result that is consistent with legal precedent, as well as sound public policy. CBA urges the Commission to proceed promptly to adopt rules to achieve that result, to give the public the benefit of more diversity of programming, diversity of ownership voices, entry opportunities for small businesses, and the advancement of the dissemination of ideas and creation of jobs on the local level."

In Reply Comments, CBA said:

"The purpose of this proceeding is to promote localism. Nothing that cable interests have argued advances the cause of localism at all, and they certainly do not volunteer to subject themselves to a requirement that they come up with their own locally produced programming the way Class A stations must do by law. The Class A television industry is trying to solve a problem, by suggesting a completely lawful way to enable Class A stations to acquire the 'full power' label that brings them squarely within the must-carry provisions of Section 614 of the Communications Act."

Chairman Martin spoke the real truth when he said in a speech on October 2, 2007, that "as the Courts have recognized, cable carriage is necessary for broadcast channels to survive. Today, there simply is not an economic model by which a broadcaster can support a free programming stream that reaches only over-the-air households." Class A television stations are the only broadcast stations of any kind required by law to broadcast local programming. That is what we do and what we want to continue doing. Please help us to survive by giving us access to cable television, which has absolute control of the antenna terminals of a substantial majority of the nation's television receivers. It is a gateway through which we must be able to pass to provide the service to the public that we are mandated by law to provide.

If you do not vote, the Chairman's proposal cannot see the light of day. We are entitled to a full airing of the issues and a chance to show what we can do to make broadcast television be more local and specialized, serving the needs of those who are left out by an industry focused on "lowest common denominator" service for mass audiences.

The promise of low power television and its many essential services to the public must be preserved. This proposal will create the necessary environment for our Industry to not just survive but thrive in the digital television future.

Please vote to release this proposal for public comment and demonstrate to the public and our Industry that you truly believe in empowering local voices serving underserved communities and preserving the essential nature of low power television across this great land.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Bruno', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ronald J. Bruno, President
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